

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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TAGS: PINT GH

SUBJECT: REORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT OF GHANA

1. BY DECREE ANNOUNCED 1930 HOURS OCTOBER 9, GOVT OF GHANA HAS INSTITUTED MAJOR REORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE. IN WORDS OF DECREE STEPS TAKEN AS "ARMED FORCES ARE COMPELLED TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE PART IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF GHANA" TO CARRY OUT "AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF 1972 REVOLUTION. NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CHANGES ALSO ANNOUNCED AND WILL BE SUBJECT OF SEPTEL.

2. DECREE ESTABLISHES SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMC) WHICH SUPERCEDES NATIONAL REDEMPTION COUNCIL (NRC) AS TOP POLICY MAKING BODY. SMC WILL COMPRISE CHAIRMAN (ACHEAMPONG), CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF (OKAI), FOUR SERVICE CHIEFS (AKUFFO OF ARMY, BEAUSOLEIL OF AIRFORCE, DZANG OF NAVY AND UTAKA OF BORDER GUARDS) AND INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE (AKO). EACH MEMBER OF

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SMC WILL HOLD OFFICE BY VIRTUE OF HIS SERVICE APPOINTMENT AND

WHEN THAT APPOINTMENT IS RELINQUISHED HE WILL LEAVE SMC.

3. NRC WILL CONTINUE BUT WILL BE SUBORDINATE TO SMC AND WILL BE CHARGED WITH ADMINISTRATION OF POLICY FORMULATED BY SMC TO WHICH IT WILL BE RESPONSIBLE. ITS MEMBERSHIP WILL COMPRISE CHAIRMAN, CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF, COMMISSIONERS OF STATE (HOLDING FUNCTIONAL PORTFOLIOS), REGIONAL COMMISSIONERS, INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE, SERVICE CHIEFS, TWO INFANTRY BRIGADE COMMANDERS AND ATTORNEY GENERAL.

4. ROLE OF ARMED FORCES ADVISORY COUNCIL (AFAC) AND QUESTION OF ITS POSSIBLE EXPANSION TO INCLUDE SOME LOWER RANKING OFFICERS IS NOT ADDRESSED IN NEW DECREE. IT SEEMS POSSIBLE, BUT NOT YET CERTAIN, THAT AFAC MAY TAKE LEGISLATIVE ROLE WITHIN PRESCRIBED LIMITS. IF IT IS EXPANDED THIS STEP WOULD SERVE TO MUTE SOME CRITICISM THAT UPPER ECHELONS OF MILITARY ARE DOMINATING GOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY AND GIVING LITTLE HEED TO OPINIONS OF MORE JUNIOR OFFICERS. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL REPORTS OF DISSATISFACTION IN LOWER LEVELS BOTH OVER LACK OF PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT AND OVER SUPPOSED SHORTCOMING OF SUPERIORS. ROLE OF AFAC WILL BE ASPECT TO BE WATCHED CAREFULLY.

5. DECREE ALSO PROVIDES FOR CONSTITUTION OF "SELECT WORKING COMMITTEES" TO "ADVISE ON SUCH MATTERS AS MAY BE DETERMINED BY SMC". WE TAKE THIS TO MEAN ADVISORY COMMITTEES WILL BE ATTACHED TO SOME, IF NOT ALL, MINISTRIES. INTERESTING IS THAT DECREE PROVIDES THAT "AT LEAST TWO MEMBERS OF EACH COMMITTEE SHALL BE ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL". THIS APPARENTLY MEANS (1) THAT LOWER ECHELONS OF MILITARY COULD BE INCLUDED ON COMMITTEES AND THUS PROVIDE PARTIAL RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS MENTIONED IN PRECEDING PARAGRAPH; AND (2) THAT SOME CIVILIAN PERSONNEL WILL BE INCLUDED PROVIDING MODICUM OF POLITICAL INPUT INTO THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS.

THE NRC REGIME HAS, IN OUR VIEW, SUFFERED FROM ITS LACK OF REGULARIZED CONSULTATION WITH CIVILIANS WHO CAN OFFER POLITICAL AS WELL AS SPECIALIZED TALENT.

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6. WE THUS EXPECT THE NEW SYSTEM TO TIGHTEN HIGHER ECHELON CONTROL AT THE TOP BUT AT SAME TIME (AND IN PARTIAL CONTRADICTION) ALLOW PARTICIPATION OF LOWER MILITARY LEVELS AND SOME CIVILIANS. THE FORMER IS UNLIKELY TO BE A STRONG POSITIVE ASPECT (OTHER THAN SERVING AS CHANNEL FOR EXPRESSION OF DISCONTENT AND THEREBY DEFLECTING PLOTTING) BUT THE LATTER MAY SERVE PURPOSE OF GAINING MORE LOGICAL AND PRACTICAL DECISIONS AND ENHANCED IMPLEMENTATION. WHILE DECREE TO

CONSIDERABLE EXTENT PARALLELS CHANGES IN NIGERIA (AND WAS,
WE ARE TOLD, STIMULATED IN PART BY THEM), IT SEEMS
UNLIKELY GHANA WILL SOON GO SO FAR AS TO APPOINT CONSTITUTIONAL
COMMISSION. IT MAY SERVE AS SUCCESSFUL COUNTER-COUP STEP,
BUT ITS LONG RUN VALUE IN GOVERNANCE REMAINS IN QUESTION.

7. COPIES OF DECREE WILL BE POUCHED TO ADDRESSEES.
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